

TESTIMONY

Pennsylvania Senate Committee on Local Government
June 23rd, 2017

Luis Adames Corcino
Mayo Mini Market
3852 J Street, Philadelphia

Good morning, Chairman Wagner, Senator Williams, and the members of the Committee on Local Government.

My name is Luis Adames Corcino, and I am a resident of the Juniata Park section of Philadelphia, in Senator Tartaglione's district.

I own and operate the Mayo Mini Market located at 3852 J Street in Philadelphia. I have been in business at this location for over 18 years and have 6 employees.

I am here this morning to talk about the harm the Philadelphia Beverage Tax has caused my business, my family, and my community.

My business is down and my customers are struggling. I see it in their faces. I see it in the things they can no longer afford. It breaks my heart when a dad wants to treat his son to a soda, but can no longer afford the price.

Sales in my store are down almost by almost 25 percent. This tax not only hurts my customers, but it hurts my employees and my family and me personally. It's not fair.

Philadelphia has a huge poverty rate. A large proportion of our citizens are living under the poverty line. This tax is hurting Philadelphia by hurting our small businesses, the same small businesses that employ people from our neighborhoods. Like my store.

This tax is not just killing my beverage sales, it is also hurting my store's sales of everything else that my customers usually buy in my store. My sales have been down since the tax started in January. Now that it's June and the summer is here, you would think that people would buy more sodas and drinks. Not at my store.

Young people, mothers, my regular customers — they all stay away from buying these drinks now. Sometimes they say to me they go to stores right outside the city and buy their food and drinks and groceries there. These stores don't have to charge the tax, so they can buy them cheaper. Good for them, but not so good for me. Why does this tax hurt us in the city? It doesn't seem fair or right. Taxes are high enough in Philadelphia. We don't need this one.

People, my customers, they also don't know why they get charged this tax. I tell them that I'm getting charged for the tax also. Some get mad at me, and some people complain to my cashier, asking why they've got to pay this crazy tax. They don't think it's fair, either. Sometimes, the tax

is more than the real cost of the bottle of soda when they buy the 2 liter or big bottles. It's ridiculous. This tax is driving business outside the City.

Senators, I hope you can do something about getting rid of the beverage tax. Thank you for hearing my testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions that you or the Committee may have.